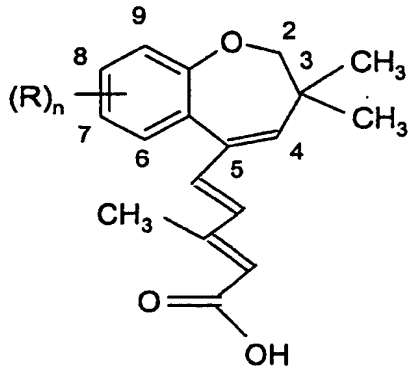
CLAIMS

1- Metastable form of the compounds of the formula I:



I

in which

n represents 0, 1 or 2 ;

and the radicals R, which may be identical or different, are alkyl or alkoxy groups, or halogen atoms.

2- Metastable form according to Claim 1, of a compound of the formula I in which n represents 1 and R, in position 7, represents methoxy, the said metastable form being characterised by a melting point of 151 to 153°C as measured by differential thermal analysis by scanning between 40 and 180°C at a rate of 10°C/minute, and an X-ray diffraction spectrum defined by the absorption wavelengths in Table I below:

No.	Absorption wavelength (cm^{-1})	Percentage of transmission (%)	Intensity
1	620.27	0.660	m
2	844.38	0.892	w
3	679.11	0.865	w
4	709.98	0.568	m
5	730.24	0.907	w

6	736.03	0.891	w
7	745.67	0.849	w
8	761.11	0.843	w
9	814.16	0.518	m
10	839.24	0.683	m
11	849.85	0.889	w
12	869.15	0.660	m
13	878.79	0.466	s
14	899.05	0.936	w
15	925.10	0.755	m
16	951.14	0.740	m
17	966.58	0.688	m
18	973.33	0.587	m
19	987.80	0.815	w
20	1028.31	0.641	m
21	1046.64	0.517	m
22	1052.43	0.562	m
23	1064.97	0.859	w
24	1128.64	0.825	w
25	1168.19	0.797	w
26	1190.37	0.422	s
27	1199.06	0.408	s
28	1212.56	0.441	s
29	1251.15	0.442	s
30	1270.44	0.254	s
31	1295.52	0.659	m
32	1318.67	0.825	w
33	1355.33	0.769	w
34	1391.98	0.872	w

35	1393.91	0.872	w
36	1413.21	0.651	m
37	1432.50	0.806	w
38	1464.33	0.743	m
39	1494.24	0.511	m
40	1572.37	0.707	m
41	1599.38	0.284	s
42	1623.50	0.810	w
43	1663.05	0.650	m
44	1676.55	0.458	s
45	2837.99	0.863	w
46	2871.75	0.847	w
47	2934.45	0.819	w
48	2960.50	0.818	w
49	3018.38	0.898	w

in which

w means weak intensity,

s means strong intensity, and

m means medium intensity.

3- Process for obtaining the metastable form of a compound of the formula I according to either of Claims 1 and 2, comprising the steps consisting in:

a) salifying the corresponding stable form of the compound of the formula I by forming a carboxylic acid salt;

b) acidifying an aqueous solution of the salt obtained after step a) until precipitation of the carboxylic acid in its metastable form is obtained.

4- Process according to Claim 3, characterised in that in step a), a sodium or potassium salt is formed.

5- Process according to Claim 3, characterised in that in step a), the stable form of the compound of the formula I is reacted with potassium hydroxide or sodium hydroxide.

6- Process according to Claim 3, characterised in that in step a), the process is performed in aqueous medium, the stable form of the compound of the formula I initially being in suspension in water.

7- Process according to Claim 3, characterised in that in step b), the acidification is performed by the action of hydrochloric acid or sulfuric acid.

8- Process according to Claim 6, characterised in that the acidification in step b) is performed by adding hydrochloric acid or sulfuric acid to the reaction medium.

9- Process according to any one of Claims 3 to 8, characterised in that the acid concentration in step b) ranges between 0.05 M and 10 M and preferably between 0.1 and 0.5 M.

10- Process according to any one of Claims 3 to 9, characterised in that in step b), the acidification is performed at between 50 and 120°C, and the precipitation is performed by cooling the reaction medium.

11- Process according to Claim 10, characterised in that, for the precipitation, the reaction medium is cooled to between 15 and 40°C.

12- Process according to any one of Claims 3 to 11, characterised in that the stable form of the compound of the formula I is obtained by saponification of the corresponding alkyl ester, followed by steps of acidification, extraction with a water-immiscible solvent, such as an ether or an ester, separation of the phases by

settling, evaporation and then crystallisation from a solvent chosen from a lower alkanol, acetonitrile, ethyl acetate, tetrahydrofuran and acetone.

13- Pharmaceutical composition comprising, as active principle, the metastable form of a compound of the formula I according to either of Claims 1 and 2, in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

14- Use of the metastable form of a compound of the formula I according to either of Claims 1 and 2, for the preparation of a medicament for the prevention or treatment of dyslipidaemia, atherosclerosis and diabetes.